

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS STATE 204137

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, EI, UK

SUBJECT: MEDIA STORIES ON POSSIBLE USG NORTHERN IRELAND
INITIATIVE --

FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT DEPARTMENT'S NOON PRESS
BRIEFING AUGUST 24:

QUOTE:

Q. JOHN, THERE IS A STORY IN THE TIMES TODAY WHICH
SUGGESTS THAT THE UNITED STATES IS CONSIDERING BRINGING
PRESSURE TO BEAR IN SOME WAY ON THE PROBLEM IN ULSTER.

A. YES.

Q. AND THERE HAS BEEN LOTS OF SPECULATION IN THE IRISH
PRESS, SO IS THERE ANY ACTION BEING CONTEMPLATED?

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 204137

A. GEORGE, YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE SECRETARY, SOME WEEKS
AGO, MET WITH INTERESTED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO DISCUSS
NORTHERN IRELAND AND ALL WERE AGREED THAT THE PROBLEM MUST
BE RESOLVED BY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES DIRECTLY CONCERNED,
AND THAT THE LONG-STANDING U.S. POLICY OF NON-INVOLVEMENT
IS THE CORRECT POLICY.

THEY ALSO AGREED THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD LOOK INTO HOW WE MIGHT BE HELPFUL WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NOT BEING DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT OVER THE SITUATION THERE. WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING INTO HOW WE MIGHT BE HELPFUL, AND HAVE, NATURALLY, CONSULTED WITH THE BRITISH AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS AND WITH THESE POLITICAL LEADERS.

Q. WHAT POLITICAL LEADERS?

A. I THINK THAT REFERS TO THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WITH WHOM THE SECRETARY MET.

Q. COULD YOU READ THAT LAST LINE AGAIN, PLEASE? AFTER "IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL."

A. WELL, WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING INTO WHAT HELP WE MIGHT GIVE OR HOW WE MIGHT BE HELPFUL, AND HAVE NATURALLY CONSULTED WITH THE BRITISH AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS AND THE POLITICAL LEADERS THAT THE SECRETARY MET WITH SOME WEEKS AGO.

Q. HOW COULD WE BE HELPFUL, ASIDE FROM WATCHING ARMS?

A. WELL, AS I SAY, WE ARE LOOKING INTO IT, AND I WOULD VERY MUCH DISLIKE TO GET OUT AHEAD OF ANY POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 204137

DEVELOPMENTS LIKE THAT. I AM REALLY NOT ABLE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY.

Q. ARE YOU CONTEMPLATING A STATEMENT, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, OF POLICY?

A. AGAIN, OZZIE, I DON'T WANT TO PREDICT THE FUTURE.

Q. JOHN, THERE ARE SPECIFIC REPORTS THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AT LEAST HAS BEEN SHOWN A DRAFT OF A PROPOSED SPEECH BY PRESIDENT CARTER ON THIS SUBJECT. IS THAT NOT CORRECT?

A. I CAN'T GO BEYOND CONFIRMING THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BRITISH AND THE IRISH.

Q. THERE IS A SUGGESTION THAT THE ADMINISTRATION MIGHT ENCOURAGE U.S. PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN ULSTER. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT THAT?

A. NO, I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT THAT, GEORGE. CHRISTOPHER

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